



Illness Investigation

June 18, 2002

Grand Canyon National Park has received notification of 59 incidents of gastrointestinal illness associated with white water rafting on the Colorado River in the park.

What We Know

1. All reported illnesses to date involve flu- like symptoms consisting of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
2. Initial cases of illness occurred on June 1 at approximately River Mile 52.
3. This type of illness is usually self- limiting in normally healthy adults to 24- 48 hours without additional medical assistance or treatment.
4. Young, elderly, or immunocompromised individuals may experience significantly higher health risks from the same symptoms, requiring prompt medical attention, and should be aware that medical assistance in the Grand Canyon backcountry may not be immediately available.

What We Are Investigating

1. We are attempting to determine the exact nature, cause, and source of the illness.
2. The National Park Service, United States Public Health Service, Coconino County Department of Public Health, Arizona State Epidemiology Office, and the Centers for Disease Control are cooperating in the collection and analysis of data.
3. Persons reporting illness are being interviewed.
4. Where possible, fecal and/or vomitus samples will be collected for laboratory analysis.

What You Can Do

The best ways to protect yourself from this type of illness include:

- Assuring the use of sanitary food handling procedures.
- Using good personal hygiene practices, including thorough hand washing with soap.
- Assuring the proper preparation/disinfection of drinking water.

Contacts

If you have questions regarding this illness outbreak, or if you have become ill while traveling in the Grand Canyon National Park backcountry, please contact:

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or

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or

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